

Study Seven



Studying The Bible

Read the lesson carefully, and fill in the Bible references before coming to the study.

The Bible is the word of God written down. It is a library of 66 books written over many centuries by about 40 different authors, using three original languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. It is quite unlike any other library, because it was written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus it is a reliable teacher of all that God wants us to know about Him and His ways. Above all, the Bible points us to Christ. He is its great central theme.

1. The Reason for Bible Study

It is vital that we study the Bible because the Bible tells us all God wants us to know about the Christian life. It gives us knowledge of God and of His will. It encourages us to trust and to serve Him.

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2 Timothy 3:16-17

2. The Benefits of Bible Study

The Bible is food to help us grow spiritually. Our souls, like our bodies, need food to be healthy. Failure to eat is a sign of ill-health. Christians need spiritual food to be spiritually healthy. As healthy babies eat, so also healthy Christians receive the milk of God's Word.



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1 Peter 2:2-3

The Bible is light, showing us right from wrong and directing our lives.



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Psalms 119:105 & 130

The Bible is a probe, revealing our heart, and showing us things about ourselves that need to be changed.

Hebrews 4:12



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The Bible is a weapon to be used in our fight against the Devil.

Ephesians 6:17



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3. Studying the Bible with Others

We study the Bible when we meet for Sunday worship. This is because we can only worship God in a fitting manner if He tells us what He is like; and again we can only go out to serve Him if we know what He wants us to do. To get the most out of preaching:

- a) Pray before coming to church.
- b) Bring your Bible and make use of it.
- c) Concentrate on the sermon – accept the fact that this takes effort.
- d) Apply the sermon to your life.
- e) Ask about anything you do not understand (afterwards).
- f) Take notes if you find it helpful.

A church's mid-week Bible Studies are also an important and valuable way of getting to know the Bible. Attend whenever you can and make a note of anything that puzzles you.

4. Studying the Bible by Yourself

It is important to spend time studying the Bible on your own. Try to find a regular time for this. Aim at daily Bible Study, even if you can only manage 20 minutes a day.

There are many ways to study the Bible at home and you will never exhaust them. Before doing anything else, pray for understanding. The psalmist's prayer is helpful.

Psalm 119:18

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Reading the Bible every day requires effort. Either sin will keep you from God's Word, or God's Word will keep you from sin.

Psalm 119:11

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Now follow these simple guidelines:

- a) **Turn to a passage** that is not too difficult. Any Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John), followed by the Acts of the Apostles, is a good foundation for a new believer.
- b) **Read several paragraphs**, or even a chapter, every day – more than once if necessary.
- c) **Read more widely**, as you have opportunity, and do not neglect the Old Testament.

There are many different Bible Reading Notes available. If you are interested in using any of these helps they can be obtained through the Pastor. Try and progress to those Bible Notes that work steadily through a section of the Bible. Most books of the Bible have a developing theme. You will miss that theme if you flit from one Bible book to another.

5. Thoughtful Bible Study

Read the Bible thoughtfully. God wants us to meditate on His Word every day.

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Psalm 1:2

Bible meditation is not about emptying our minds. It is thinking about what God says, and considering how we should live as a result.

So, whether studying at church or at home, ask yourself:

- a) What does this passage teach me about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit?
- b) What does this passage teach me about myself, and people in general?
- c) Is there a promise to claim, or an example to follow?
- d) Is there a warning to heed, or a command to obey?
- e) Is God saying something directly to me in my present situation?

6. More Hints on Bible Study

- a) Write down what you have learnt, especially if there is action to take.
- b) Pray for courage to take the necessary action.
- c) Memorise verses that you have found particularly helpful.
- d) Read helpful books—ask your pastor to help you.

7. Finally: a Note of Caution

Never let your times alone with the Bible degenerate into academic studies. The main aim of our regular reading of the Bible is to have fellowship with the Lord, not to pass an exam. What is more, you are looking for a “Faith For Life”, not a “Thought For The Day”! Everything you learn is another piece of the jigsaw of God’s truth. Every day the picture will become clearer. The Word of God tells us all we need to know for living the Christian life, but only in Heaven can we hope to understand all that the Bible says.